



RHYMES AND ROSES

BY

SAMUEL MINTURN PECK

*Author of "Cap and Bells," "Rings and Love Knots,"
"Fair Women of To-Day."*



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A WINTER LAY.

To
MY FRIEND
LIEUTENANT WILLIAM GEORGE ELLIOT
U. S. ARMY.

*Rhymes and roses I bear,
They blew in the gay Southern air.
Choose, Gallants! Who knows
But a rhyme and a rose
May win you the heart of the Fair.*

LYRICS OF NATURE.

THE WINTER RAIN.

I LOVE to sit at evening's close
And listen to the wind that blows
 The rain amid the trees ;
And hear the cheerful chimney sing
A song to Winter's parting wing,
 In drowsy harmonies.

'Tis sweet to list the plashing rain.
The soft sound patters in my brain
 Till, like the frost-bound earth,
My frozen fancy gains new powers,
And burgeons forth fresh leaves and flowers,
 Bright dreams of coming mirth.

Forsooth how many pleasant things
The tireless hand of Nature brings,
Intangible, yet sweet !
Unlike the fields that catch the rain,
I hear the sound and cull the gain
Safe from the tempest's beat.

While listening to the storm without,
I wonder what they dream about,—
The flowers beneath the mold ;
Perchance, like maidens fair and gay,
Their dreams are all of rich array
To witch the wood and wold.

The rain is never sad to me ;
In truth it hath a note of glee.
Each drop that downward goes
May give sweet life-blood to a pink,
Or set a daisy's eye a-wink ;
It may be so, who knows ?

So let it rain, I love the chime.
Each crystal raindrop ticks the time
Till days of bloom and song,
To fragrant flowers and birds in tune,—
Fair guests that never come too soon
And never stay too long.

THE OLD GIN HOUSE.

SWAYING pines have grown around it,
Trumpet vines with garlands bound it,
Yellow jasmines climbed and crowned it,
 Laughing down their green and gold ;
Tendrils through each crack escaping
Hide the worn roof widely gaping,
Every hole with beauty draping
 In the gin house gray and old.

In the morn the squirrels peeping,
O'er the rafters lightly leaping,
With a bark awake the sleeping
 Owl, who blinks up, drowsy-polled ;

And at night, with sudden stirring
From the eaves, the wan light blurring,
Flit the bats with dusky whirring
Round the gin house gray and old.

Oh, the days well-nigh forgotten,
When along the floor now rotten
Waves and waves of snowy cotton
Oft in billowy beauty rolled,
While the toilers wrought a-singing
Mellow lays that yet are ringing,
O'er the tide of time still winging
From the gin house gray and old.

Oh, those songs with sweetness teeming,
Chasing care and pain redeeming !
Often still they soothe my dreaming,
By sad memory softly trolled ;
And at eve their echoes dying
Haunt me, 'neath the pine-trees lying,

Listening to the wind low sighing
Round the gin house gray and old.

Lorn is now the old plantation,
Fairest spot in all creation ;
Teardrops choke the sad relation,
And its sorrow can't be told.
Poets lilt of ruins hoary
Over sea in song and story ;
All must yield in Beauty's glory
To the jasmined gin house old.

THE BLUE-BELLS OF ALABAMA.

THE blue-bells are coming ! The leaflets peer through
Their gray bed of grasses to greet the soft dew ;
A little more sunlight, a little more rain,
And the sweet bells will witch with their chiming
again

The gay south wind from the Mexique sea ;
For the blue-bells are coming
To list the bees humming
Under the greenwood tree.

The blue-bells are peeping ! In slumber at night
They haunt my pillow with visions of light.
I view in my dreams when the moon is a-bloom
Blue flowers that sway in the still, pale gloom
Till my heart is enraptured with prescient glee ;

For the blue-bells are peeping,
Their early tryst keeping
Under the greenwood tree.

Yes, up through the grasses, as fair as of old
The blue-bells are coming to gladden the wold,
To ring Winter out to the North, and away !
And to herald the Spring with her sandals gay
That trip, trip, trip, over lakelet and lea
Just as she passes
Over the grasses
Under the greenwood tree

WILD PLUM BLOSSOMS.

(Alabama.)

WHERE the tawny sedges sigh,
 Dreaming of dead Winter's wrath,
Where the rabbit leaping by,
 Lightly threads the reedy path,
There beneath the new-washed sky
Wild plum blossoms witch the eye.

Not with slow and coy advance,
 Do they wax and greet the view.
Suddenly they charm the glance
 Like a sweet dream swiftly true ;
Twigs that scarce foretold a trace
Fire the blood with thrilling grace.

Dew-prankt buds in sprays of white
 Waving o'er the winter's tomb,
Not in sorrow but delight
 Have they burst in fragrant bloom.
Seeking with sweet spells to bind
Every vagrant Southern wind.

Some beside the zig-zag fence
 Lean their foreheads white and pure ;
Some above the broom-sedge dense
 Reach white arm in spicy lure,
Like fair Naiads breathing balm
Of the mellilote and palm.

When the bands of wild bees come
 Swooping down like buccaneers,
Heedless of their tropic hum,
 Every blossom laughs nor fears
Aught such tiny foes can do,
Brigands of the breezy blue.

Though at morn with beauty drest,
Lissomely their buds unfold,
Yet I love their beauty best
When the day is growing old,
And the lingering sunbeams part
From a grace untouched by art.

ALABAMA.

(Written on the homeward way September 20th, 1893.)

Ho, for the land of the myrtle and pine,

Where the skies are so blue and the blossoms so fair ;
Where the laurel and jessamine enchantingly twine,
And wreathe with rich perfume the Circean air ;
Where the sandals of Summer long rest by the streams,
And her balm-breathing cestus is ever unbound—

On to the shrine of my love and my dreams,

Ho, for the land beauty-crowned—

Alabama.

The hills of the Norland—I've wandered them o'er,

I've scented the lips of its shimmering sea ;

Where the rosemary blows in a mist by the shore ;

The pink shells have murmured their music to me.

I listened and gazed o'er the white flashing foam
That broke on the billows and dimpled its breast;
My feet lingered there but my heart was at home—
At home in its rose-shadowed nest—
Alabama.

Ho, for the land of the myrtle and pine,
Where the skies are so blue and the blossoms so fair.
I long for a gleam of its starlight divine,
I long for the touch of its breeze in my hair.
There Time tells his rosary only with flowers
That thrill with the echoes of love and of mirth—
A blessing I breathe on its blossomy bowers—
A kiss for the land of my birth—
Alabama.

DOWN UPON THE OLD PLANTATION.

O, THE balmy southern spring
Down upon the old plantation !
Where the skies their grace renew,
Tempest-washed to deeper hue
'Till a shimmering vault of blue
Arches over hill and dale.
Who could mourn the winter's wrath
As he views its chastened path
Blooming forth more sweet and hale !

Everywhere there meets the eye
Loveliness beyond relation ;
Nothing but the pine-trees sigh
Down upon the old plantation.

Dimpled pleasure smiles at care
Down upon the old plantation.
Lisping zephyrs every hour,
Laugh above some new-born flower.
Wood and field are beauty's dower.
Every echo speaks of bliss.
Where is any nook for grief
When each fragrant flower and leaf
Lures the sunlight with a kiss !

Far and near there greet the ear
Sweetest sounds in all creation,
Naught but night e'er sheds a tear
Down upon the old plantation.

Half the joys can ne'er be told
Down upon the old plantation.
Lofty pines and spicy bays,
Zig-zag fences, woodland ways,
Birds and bees and jasmine sprays
Offer joys that never wane.

Swinging in the muscadine
Not for Lethe's cup I pine,
Fame and fortune tempt in vain.

Who would wish afar to roam
With such scenes for contemplation?
O, there is no place like home,
Down upon the old plantation!

THE CHEROKEE ROSE.

COME ripple your fleetest,
O rhymes that are meetest,
In praise of the sweetest
 Wild blossom that blows.
Though tripping most lightly,
And pattering brightly,
Ye ne'er can sing rightly
 The Cherokee rose.

The zephyr that kisses
Its petals hath blisses
That paradise misses
 And seraph ne'er knows.
So charming its face is,
I long to change places
With bee that embraces
 The Cherokee rose.

In sultry midsummer,
Who would not become a
Luxurious hummer
 That merrily goes
Defying the lances
That noonday advances,
To revel where dances
 The Cherokee rose.

Shame on the brown thrushes
That pipe in the bushes!
My melodic gushes
 Were sweeter than those—
If I could sit swinging
Where perfumes are winging
More worthy my singing
 The Cherokee rose.

ELDER BLOSSOMS.

THE attar of rose is quaint and is rare,

It pleases all noses, or ruddy, or fair ;

It is the most regal of scents.

But talk as you will, I'll hold to it still,

Tho' you deem my perception is dense,

There's nothing so sweet as

The wild elder blossoms

That bloom by the old rail fence.

The odor of musk is a scent of old time,

A whiff in the dusk is a theme for a rhyme ;

'Tis the perfume of all most intense.

But a fig for the smell that nothing can quell !

You'd wish it a mile or two hence

If once you had scented

The wild elder blossoms

That bloom by the old rail fence.

A violet scent is a scent that is neat,
To use in one's twenties an odor most meet,
A fragrance quite free from pretense.
But leave it for maids to bind in their braids,
And give me the rarest of scents,
The breath of the blossoms
The wild elder blossoms
That bloom by the old rail fence.

Their fragile white grace is like *point de Venise* ;
They drape the wood places with fragrance and peace ;
A virginal charm they dispense.
Like a lass of sixteen that no lover has seen,
They spell you with bright innocence.
In childhood they won me,
The wild elder blossoms
That bloom by the old rail fence.

SASSAFRAS.

(Alabama.)

FRINGING cypress forests dim

Where the owl makes weird abode,
Bending down with spicy limb

O'er the old plantation road,
Through the swamp and up the hill,

Where the dappled by-ways run,
Round the gin house, by the mill,
Floats its incense to the sun.

Swift to catch the voice of spring,

Soon its tasselled blooms appear ;
Modest is their blossoming,

Breathing balm and waving cheer ;
Rare the greeting that they send
To the fragrant wildwood blooms,

Bidding every blossom blend
In a chorus of perfumes.

On it leans the blackberry vine,
With white sprays caressingly ;
Round its knees the wild peas twine
Beckoning to the yellow bee ;
Through its boughs the red-bird flits
Like a living flake of fire,
And with love-enlightened wits
Weaves his nest and tunes his lyre.

Oh, where skies are summer-kissed
And the drowsy days are long
'Neath the sassafras to list
To the field-hand's mellow song !
Or, more sweet than chimes that hang
In some old cathedral dome,
Catch the distant kingle-clang
Of the cow-bells tinkling home !

IN MY LADY'S GARDEN.

JASMINES blow
White as snow;
Myrtles wave sweet plumes of pink;
Roses ope
Gay as hope,
Tints of red and gold to link;
Honeysuckles toy and twine,
Wafting fragrance rich as wine
From their blithe bee-haunted shrine
In my Lady's garden.

Poppies drowse
 'Neath the boughs ;
Purple spice-trees nod and sway ;
 Fair as milk
 Smooth as silk,
Lilies clasp their palms to pray ;
 Violets peep with beryl hue,
 Gleaming still with happy dew,
 Under skies so blue, so blue
 In my Lady's garden.

Hollyhocks,
 Crimson phlox
Curtsey to the fickle breeze
 As he hies
 Lover-wise,
Fluttering the shy sweet-peas.
 Glancing down, the cedar sighs ;
 Wraiths of broken vows arise ;
 Yet love laughs at cynic eyes
 In my Lady's garden.

As the noon,
Ebbing soon,
Evening comes to crown the day,
Scents more rare
Rise and fare
From the sweet mimosa spray.
Day is fleeting, dusk is nigh,
Fainting sunbeams swoon and die ;
Homeward flits the butterfly
In my Lady's garden.

Now the stars
In bright cars
Flock with fairy light to bless
Every bloom
In the gloom
With a tearful tenderness ;
And a limpid lustrous note,
Lullaby-like is a-float
From the mock-bird's peerless throat
In my Lady's garden.

MY CEDAR-TREE.

MORN'S rosy fingers spread a silver sheen

Beneath my cedar's spacious boughs

In benison upon the mosses green

That no kind dew endows ;

A radiance that slowly steals away,

Loath from so sweet and fair a nook to stray

Upon its stalwart trunk an ivy vine

Climbs ever up ; disdaining rest

Until its faith-inspired tendrils twine

The tree's high crest,

And heaven with patience sought expands to view,

A blissful arch of pure and gleaming blue.

Of-times a sigh bestirs its balmy breast
That breathes of peace and spices hale ;
And, slumber-freed, it entertains a guest,
The crooning western gale,
The wingéd gossip of the wood and wold
With tidings glad in fragrant whispers told.

Upon a rustic seat I view a-dream
My garden's quaint old-fashioned flowers,
And list the bees whose mellow murmurs seem
A spell to bind the hours
Lest they, alas, should flit away too fast
To wither on the bosom of the past.

Which is most blissful, morning, noon or night,
Within my shady bower of calm ?
Morn, with its glee ; noon, with its full delight ;
Night with its dusky balm ?
Each moment dons a beauty all its own
Whose grace forbids the sigh for pleasures flown.

Beneath these pendent branches quickly flee
The fevered cares that fret and fray,
As if a spirit dwelt within the tree
Who wiles regret away,
And makes the pathway to a sad heart smooth
Whereon sweet fancies glide to calm and soothe.

O shrine of happy dreams and visions fair,
Perchance an hundred years to come
Thou still may'st woo the joyous Southern air,
When these poor lips are dumb,
And many a heart unborn may own thy spell;
But who, O who will love thee half so well?

SWAMP FANCIES.

WITH tints no painter's brush can limn,
Above the swamp, far, faint and dim,
 Floats softly fair a purple haze
 Like fabrics spun by elves and fays,
 Or incense fine
 Around a shrine
 That veils the view yet lures the gaze.

Beneath those fairy films of mist
By southern shine to beauty kist
 Sweet fancy flits with summer glee
 To fashion forth in glamorie
 The fragrant pomps
 Of Southern swamps
 That far outvie the storied sea.

Adown the winding lane I pass,
With blackberries fringed and sassafras,
And scent the alder's spicy snow
Upon the old rail fence ablow:
 Its fragile grace
 Like antique lace
On beauty's bosom long ago.

Still lower sinks the bosky lane
Till gum and pine in murmurs plain
So softly on the pensive ear
I dream the sounds I scarce can hear.
 And each step brings
 Some flash of wings,
Some note that on the silence springs.

Through leafy glooms my footsteps go
Where emerald-throned the bayflowers blow,
Their luscious breath a fragrant tide
That fills the swamp from side to side,

And climbs the hills
By night and thrills
Sad hearts with hopes by day denied.

Upon the bayous' shadowed brink
I watch the water lilies link
Their flexile arms and softly float,
While sweetness swathes each naiad throat,
Till all around
Seems fairy ground
That waits to greet some elfin boat.

No blustering wind finds entrance here
But musky zephyrs steal and peer,
And kiss the ferns to trembling shy,
Or set the slender reeds a-sigh,
Then soar above
On wings of love
Upon the baybloom's breast to die.

Enough, sweet Fancy, memory's child !
Seek not to paint my native wild;
Thy loving brush still futile plays;
What sleeps beyond yon purple haze
No hand can limn,
No tongue can hymn,
And only fairy lips could praise.

BAY FLOWERS.

IN the thicket with the 'possum and the 'coon,
Where the log cocks hammer and prate,
And the gray owl hoots at the waning moon,
And the wildcat leaps to his mate,
Where the swamp rabbits bound
With a dim, dark sound
O'er the oozing ground

Below—

Oh, that's where the bay flowers blow.

The fungus dark on the stump
Wears the grewsome stain of blood,
And the moccasin glides from the cypress hump,
And crawls o'er the festering mud,

But witching and rare,
In the bough-meshed air,
With blossoms as fair
As snow,
The balm-girt bay flowers blow.

The breezes from the forest glooms
Are tranced by the joy of spring—
They have kissed the lips of the wild bay blooms,
And are rapt by the spells they fling ;
And when at morn
O'er the cotton and corn
They sigh love-lorn,
I know
They have been where the bay flowers blow.

THE FOREST LIGHTS.

WHERE the twisting brambles twine
With the trailing berry vine,
And the looping muscadine
 Wreathes the woodland stream,—
Where the cricket builds her nest,
On the mossbank's emerald breast,
And the shadowed violets rest,
 Lo! the shy lights gleam.

Wanderers from the upper day,
Gliding down through pine and bay,
Leaf to leaf they went astray,
 Frolic beam from beam.

Round the pine-bole's mimic grot
Dancing, dimpling, gay their lot ;
Sure, it is a witching spot,
Where the shy lights gleam.

Oh, what spicy scents are blown,
Oh, what golden dust is strown
From the bay flower's milk-white zone,
Swaying, half a-dream !
Oh, what perfumes cool and rare
Noontide zephyrs lift and bear
From the water lilies fair,
Where the shy lights gleam !

Flitting over the cypress knees
Errant minstrels hie with glees,
Frisky wrens and bumble-bees
Fluting joy supreme.
Oft the wild doe comes to drink
From the streamlet's mossy brink,

And the lilies rise and sink
Where the shy lights gleam.

Oh, but 'tis an eerie sight
'Neath the moon, a summer's night,
When the silver-sandaled light
Trips that lovely stream :
Hoots the owl with laughter shrill,
Moans the wistful whip-poor-will—
Dreaming, oft my blood grows chill
Where the shy lights gleam.

HONEYSUCKLE.

ON my lattice gaily twining,
Decked with dewdrops softly shining,
 In the morn,
Happy blossom ! How I bless it,
As the early beams caress it,
 Newly born !

Oh ! the lily blooms sedately,
And the rose is proud and stately,
 And there's art
In the pink's exquisite neatness ;
But the honeysuckle's sweetness
 Wins my heart.

Its slender little chalice
Ne'er was formed to grace a palace,
But a cot.
White and blush and balmy-scented,
Fancy deems it e'er contented
With its lot.

It hears the swallow twitter
From the eaves. The little flitter
Loves the flower ;
I know it by his flutters,
And the tender strain he utters
By the hour.

Little blossom, joy arrayed in,
It reminds me of a maiden
Fair and dear,
Who fills a home with blisses
By her pretty ways and kisses
All the year.

THE FAIRY IN THE PINE.

THERE'S a fairy in the summit of the pine tree great
and high,

Where the gnarled and twisted branches bend and
sway,

And she sits and gazes ever where the hills and val-
leys lie,

And the shifting shine and shadow fleck the day ;

And she sings the sweetest song

All the balmy summer long,

Low and deep ;

But the rarest song that wings

Is the lullaby she sings,

Half a-weep,

Far above—

Is the lullaby of love,

In her sleep.

There's a fairy in the pine tree that no eye hath ever
seen,

In her lofty home she croons and weaves her spells ;
And the magic that she whispers is a tender charm, I
ween,

Or so the olden Choctaw legend tells ;

For when youthful lovers breathe

Their first love vows beneath,

Sweet and low,

The fairy in the pine

Waves a wand in mystic sign,

Ere they go—

So they say—

That their love may live for aye

Free from woe.

FOUR O'CLOCKS.

PINK and white and gold,
 'Mid the waning light,
Stars that first unfold
 At the gate of night ;
Peeping o'er the pansy beds,
 Flashing through the phlox,
A blessing on your bonny heads,
 Happy four o'clocks !

Gold and white and pink,
 Clad in bright array,
Flowerets do ye think
 Life's a gift for play ?

Ere the amber morn had broke,
 Bloomed the stalwart stocks ;
Pray whisper why so late ye woke,
 Naughty four o'clocks !

Gold and pink and white,
 Though ye are so shy,
I have guessed to-night
 Just the reason why
Ye came to watch with sleep-lorn lids
 'Neath the hollyhocks ;
Your lovers are the katydids,
 Dainty four o'clocks.

THE OLD GUM SPRING.

FROM its green and mossy lip
Pearls of limpid coolness drip,
Echoing the feet of Time
With a silver tinkling rhyme,
 Day and night unwearying.
O'er it leans a berry spray,
Round it partridge blossoms play ;
Naught its shadowed beauty mars ;
Mirrored flowers, birds and stars
 Peep up from the old gum spring.

As the calm hours glide to noon,
From the roadside floats the tune
That some dusky muleteer trolls,
While his groaning wagon rolls
 Through the spring-branch glistening.

Or anon a childish face
Comes to gaze with dimpled grace—
Then the russet drinking-gourd
Plunges in the crystal hoard,
 Sparkling in the old gum spring.

Oft at night, as o'er the pine
Drowsily the moonbeams shine,
Fragrant bay flowers white arrayed,
Spotless vestals of the glade,
 All night long their censers swing.
And perchance the mock-bird wakes,
Poet of the laurel brakes,
And with love-enraptured heart
Thrills the night with minstrel art,
 Swinging o'er the old gum spring.

SUMMER NOON.

AT drowsy noon the lily's head
Sways slowly o'er the garden bed,
Still breathing fragrance in her sleep ;
The musk-rose, nodding, strives to keep
In mind the vows the wind hath said.
A languid thrush, his bill made red
By berry wine, with joy full fed
Low croons in meditation deep,
At drowsy noon.

Upon me too the spell is shed ;
My cumbering woes are swiftly sped
As o'er my brow soft perfumes sweep,
Ah, who could sigh, or who could weep
By summer's hand to dreamland led
At drowsy noon.

UNDER THE PINES.

WHERE the shadows lull the stream

To a slumber cool and calm,

And the floating lilies gleam,

Breathing forth a restful balm,

'Neath the drowsy pines I lie ;

Summer nigh,

Careless I ;

Only let me lie and dream.

Be the murmur of the pine

All the melody I hear.

Past or future—let no sign

Mar the music in my ear.

Let e'en love awhile refrain ;

E'en his strain

I disdain.

Only let sweet rest be mine.

WHEN AUTUMN PASSETH BY.

WHERE purple elderberries vie

With sumach's crimson stain,

A flood of mellow minstrelsy

O'erflows the winding lane.

A myriad insect voices flute

And rival throats reply.

No tree, no tuft of grass is mute

When Autumn passeth by.

A perfume rare of ripening leaves

On zephyr pinions floats,

And oft the scent of browning sheaves

Blends with the cricket notes ;

Each hanging bough a censer swings

Beneath the dreamful sky,

And at her feet rich fragrance flings,
When Autumn passeth by.

The spiders thrid their gossamer
With jewels for her head ;
The thistles strew their down for her,
That softly she may tread ;
The brooklet stills its summer glee
Whene'er her feet draw nigh,
And gently drones the yellow bee
When Autumn passeth by.

Strange sorceries the spirit bind,
And work a haunting spell :
Weird voices echo on the wind,
And whisper beauty's knell.
At eventide a lonely star
Comes forth to mourn on high,
And sheds its quivering light afar,
When Autumn passeth by.

The sweetest song that ever flows
Hath sorrow in its strain ;
The keenest joy that mortal knows
Is always half a pain.
So life and death combine their art
To charm the ear and eye,
And lovely pathos wins the heart,
When Autumn passeth by.

THE LITTLE MINSTREL.

WHEN swiftly wends the autumn tide,
Nor any lingering blossoms bide
 To greet the chilly morn ;
'Mid grasses turned from green to gray,
High-perched upon a plume a-sway
 A cricket sits forlorn,
And quavers forth his eerie lay
 In measures thin and worn.

I paused to list his plaintive song ;
A myriad happy memories throng—
 Scenes that to both were bright ;
For both have loved the sweet, wild rose,
And wandered where the daisy blows,
 The summer wind's delight ;

To one who sings of kindred woes
I cannot say good-night.

Come, Little Minstrel, flee the bank
Where leaves are dun and grasses dank,
And cease thy sad refrain ;
Forsake the fields and dwell with me,
My hearth thy joyous home shall be,
Let tempests howl in vain ;
And by the fire we'll mock in glee
The storm with merry strain.

THE AUTUMN LANE.

A SONG for the autumn lane

O'erhung by sumacs and pines,

Where the spider weaves a tremulous skein

In a mist of silvery lines ;

And the asters gleam

By the wayside stream

And peep through the yellowing vines ;

And the wild mint's prayer

Floats quaint on the air

In the shade of the muscadines.

A song for the autumn lane

Where the withered thistles sigh

Like weird old folk that dream in vain
Of love 'neath a summer sky ;
While sweet scents roam
Through the thickening gloam—
Flower souls that will not die—
And the crickets trill
A dirge on the hill,
And the dark wind sobs, Good-by !

THE ROSES OF NOVEMBER.

(Alabama.)

O ROSES of November, how winsome is your grace,
How cheerily ye blossom out amid the falling leaves !
Surpassing all the buds of spring your beauty grows
apace,
And o'er the dim and dying year a fragrant garland
weaves.
The gray-haired thistles drowse and nod
Where flaunted late the goldenrod,
The aster-stars have kissed the sod ;
And over marsh and mere
The autumn winds are russet shod.
How dare ye linger here !

O Roses of November, that gleam so brave and bright
And wave your sprays so bonnily amid a world for-
lorn.

The tears will rise and flood my eyes, the while I say
good-night,

To think that ye may never live to grace another
morn.

A leaden cloud comes down the sky,
The chill wind heaves a warning sigh;
Yet though the robber Frost is nigh
There's balm for every grief;
In beauty's prime far better die
Than wither leaf by leaf.

SEA LOVE.

I LOVE the sea—its spicy balm
Forever waft through storm and calm,
Fresh as the blossoms on the lea,
Yet old as gray eternity ;
A mystic scent, whose potent thrill
The hand of art can ne'er distil
From hidden root or floweret fair.
Or aught that wood or garden bear.

With spicy glee

It taketh me ;

I love the wild, the witching sea.

I love the sea—the gifts it brings
From viewless depths, and laughing flings
With merry heart and lavish hand
Upon the shifting faithless sand

Rare shells from ocean caves below
With quaint and tender tints aglow,
Till grace and beauty richly blent
Would make Titania's heart content.

With favors free
It winneth me ;
I love the rare, the regal sea.

I love the sea—its bosom deep
Wherein a myriad mysteries sleep.
I listen to its wistful sighs
That stir my soul to sad replies.
I marvel at its wondrous sheen,
Now blue, now pink, now opaline,
With which it hides in depths below
Its wild unutterable woe.

Whate'er shall be
Of grief to me
I love the sad, the sorrowing sea.

A WINTER DREAM.

WHEN the bare brown beeches writhe and wail,
 Wrenched by the Northwind's grasp ;
When the willow trees wax stiff and pale
 In the chill of his crystal clasp :
And the long night hastes with its desolate dark
O'er the wind-worn grasses gray and stark ;
And each cold star cuts the wintry sky
Like the point of a poniard drawn on high—
I list to the backlog's smouldering crack
 And memory softly strays
On the dead year's track,
And my thoughts flit back
 To dream of the summer days.

Oh, I know a brook 'neath the green bay trees
Where the lilies rise and sink,
When the cows come down through the cypress knees
With their clanking bells to drink.
I would I could scent the lily buds now
That float on the stream 'neath the rich bay bough ;
I would I could hear the cowbells clang,
Straying up the lane where the blackberries hang ;
I can close my eyes and almost view
Each mellow bell that sways !
And the luscious hue
Of the blackberries too
As I dream of the summer days.

I long to lie on my back in the grass,
Bliss-crowned in every sense ;
I long for a breath of the sassafras
That fringes the zigzag fence,
Or to see the swift-winged hawk soar by,
With a half-formed wish in my heart to fly ;

Or to sit in the shade where the pine boughs swing
And list to the song that the redbirds sing—

Oh, these are the thoughts that come and come

 In fancy's tangled maze,

With the log cock's drum

And the wild bees' hum,

 As I dream of the summer days.

LOVE SONGS.

THE PICTURE IN MY HEART.

IN each man's soul there lives a dream
Lit by a woman's eyes,
Whose glance is like the tender gleam
That thrills the evening skies.
It is a dream that never faints
Though weal or woe befalls,
But haunts the heart, and softly paints
A picture on its walls.

It is my dream at midnight,
And in the crowded mart,
That darling face
With gentle grace—
The picture in my heart.

In each man's heart there floats a voice
That speaks to him alone,
The voice of her, his spirit's choice,
He longs to call his own.
The days may hasten like the wind,
Or lag with sullen feet,
Some day his wandering heart shall find
The face he longs to meet.

It is my dream at midnight,
Its dear eyes ne'er depart.
Oh, where is she,
My bride to be,—
The picture in my heart.

Oh, some hearts range the wide world through
And through to find their mate,
And some amid the darkness rue
That they have met too late :
A wistful glance betrays to each
What neither dares to sigh ;

A wedded bond forbids the speech
That's uttered by the eye.

It is my dream at midnight,
It makes my pulses start.
O Fate, be kind,
And let me find
The picture in my heart.

THE WANDERER.

I DREAM of thee the livelong day
Till daylight ebbs in dusk away ;
And 'neath the pale moon's tristful ray
 My thought still flies to thee.
I long and sigh to see thy face ;
In every song thou hast a place,
Each flower recalls thy winsome grace ;
 Come back, dear Love, to me.

Life's pleasures all grow dull and tame ;
More faintly glow the heights of fame,
While o'er and o'er I call thy name
 As sea-shells sing the sea.

For thee all sorrows I would bear,
For thee all dangers I would dare ;
I'd scorn a crown thou couldst not share,
Come back, sad Love, to me.

In gleeful pairs the swallows fly,
And mated too the clouds float by,
While brook to brook makes glad reply
Across the fragrant lea.

Dear Wanderer, through field and foam,
Turn, turn thy face and cease to roam :
Love's beacon burns amid the gloam
Come back. lost Love, to me.

THE AVOWAL.

I LOVE thee ! O no words can say
One-half my love, howe'er I try,
And yet my heart must have its way
And seek expression in a cry.

I call to thee with pangs forlorn :
I love thee, oh, I love thee, sweet !
Though met with anger and with scorn,
Still would my lips my love repeat.

I love thee ! Oh, would thou couldst know
The hunger in my lonely heart.
Amid the throng I hide my woe
And mask with smiles the secret smart.

I love thee, oh, I love thee ! all
My hopes and dreams around thee range :
Though storm betide and wreck befall
My deathless passion ne'er can change.

I love thee ! Lo, all pomp and power
Beside thy love would sink from sight ;
And even Glory's crimson flower
Would pale before that pearl of light.
O matchless pearl ! if it were mine
So happy all my days would be,
My heart would throb with bliss divine,
And angel eyes would envy me.

THE CAPTAIN'S SECRET.

THERE was bay upon his forehead,
There was glory in his name ;
He had led his country's cohorts
Through the crimson field of fame,
Yet from his breast at midnight,
When the throng had ceased to cheer,
He took a faded blossom
And kissed it with a tear.
A little faded violet,
A bloom of withered hue ;
But more than fame
Or loud acclaim
He prized its faded blue.

We have all a hidden story
Of a day more bright and dear ;
We may hide it with our laughter,—
It will haunt us with a tear.
And we've all some little keepsake
Where no eye can ever mark,
And like the great commander,
We kiss it in the dark.
A little faded violet,
Perchance a loop of gold,
A gift of love
We prize above
All that the earth can hold.

ACROSS THE NIGHT.

I HEAR without the raindrops fall
 Upon the casement blind ;
I catch the night-bird's lonely call
 Borne on the moaning wind ;
But let the sky be dark and drear,
 My heart is all a-flame,
 For in my ear
 With murmur clear
 Love breathes thy darling name.

Outside the branches writhe and wring
 Gaunt hands like one who grieves,
As if they fain from death would bring
 To life the poor dead leaves.

Yet sorrow seems a thing apart,
And life is full of grace,
When in my heart
Love plies his art
And limns thy peerless face.

The night is fraught with dreams for me
A thousand fancies come.
Would I could cleave the storm for thee !—
My heart will not be dumb.
Across the night on tender quest
My thought flies like a dove :
Within thy breast
Ah, let it rest
And whisper all my love.

MABEL'S SECRET.

(Told by her lover.)

THERE was a rose, a wee pink rose,
Amid the amber light,
The pet of all the garden close
It blossomed in the night.
But ere the dawn had come to peep,
And ere its bloom was shed—
Alas, for all the elves a-weep !—
That wee pink rose had fled.

Where is that wee pink rose,
Dear heart,
Where is that wee pink rose ?
Away with doubt
The secret's out ;
On Mabel's mouth it blows.

There were two stars of wondrous glee
That twinkled far above
They danced with laughter on the sea,
And lit the world with love.
But once upon a summer night—
So runs the tale of yore—
They vanished from the angel's sight,
And charmed the skies no more.

Where are those stars of glee,
Dear heart,
Where are those stars of glee?
They fled the skies
For Mabel's eyes,
And shine alone for me.

THE LASS OF CHERRY LANE.

My lass she lives in Cherry Lane
Amid the birds and bees ;
But sweeter far her merry strain
Than all their happy glees.
Her heart is true, her eyes are blue,
Her breath is like the spring,
And in the gloaming and the dew
I hear her gayly sing—
I am coming,
Sweetheart, coming,
Coming down from Cherry Hill ;
Haste to meet me,
Fly to greet me,
I'll be waiting by the mill.

Throughout the year my days are bright,

Amid the city's moil.

From morn till night my tasks are light,

It is for her I toil ;

Of all the day the hour is best

When I have left the throng,

And wending to the rosy west

I catch her tender song—

I am coming,

Sweetheart, coming,

'Neath the boughs of Cherry Lane,

Where love-lighted

Troth we plighted,

And your kisses fell like rain.

Oh, when the cherries bloom again,

And all the world is gay,

Amid the blossoms in the glen

There 'll be a wedding day.

Then every moon a honey moon,

And every season spring ;

Each night she'll sing that pretty tune,
The tune she used to sing—
 I am coming,
 Sweetheart, coming,
Shadows gather in the glen ;
 O my rover,
 Through the clover
Fly to meet your lass again.

SUSETTE.

THEY tell me that thy witching smiles

A shallow soul conceal

That thou art skilled in varied wiles

The hearts of men to steal.

But when I view thy glances gay,

Thine orbs of limpid blue—

Ah, let them prate ! Whate'er they say,

I know it can't be true,

Susette.

I know it can't be true.

They tell me when thy soft refrains

The soul of music thrill,

That they are but a syren's strains

To work the stranger ill.

But when I see the old folks throng
And little children, too,
To drink the sweetness of thy song.
I know it can't be true,
Susette.
I know it can't be true.

They tell me that thy beauty blows,
A fair and baleful flower.
That 'neath an evil star he goes
Who e'er hath felt thy power.
But when I see thy lashes shine
With pity's gentle dew
My heart repels the charge malign,
I know it can't be true,
Susette
I know it can't be true.

HEATHER BELL.

HER eyes are like the heather on the Norland hills
a-blow,

And her curving lips of laughter like a berry in the
snow.

In a snood of crimson gleaming

Lo, her locks of amber dwell,

And I'm dreaming,

Dreaming,

Dreaming,

Of my bonnie Heather-bell.

With footfall light as thistle-down she cometh ere I
ken :

Her smile is like the breaking of the moondawn in
the glen.

A myriad fancies teeming
Feed the flame I cannot quell ;
And I'm dreaming,
Dreaming,
Dreaming,
Of my bonnie Heather-bell.

Her voice is like the thrush's piping carols in the corn;
Its tender echoes haunt me thro' the night-tide till the
morn ;

Oh, her dimples shyly beaming,
They have charmed me with a spell ;
And I'm dreaming,
Dreaming,
Dreaming,
Of my bonnie Heather-bell.

IN THE TWILIGHT.

WHEN my eyes were soft and blue,
Oft your ardent love was told,
And I felt your heart was true
With its wooing blithe and bold;
Now the days of youth are by
And its light hath left mine eye,
Darling, whisper that you love me as of old.

Once my locks were rich and bright
With the gleaming tint of gold;
Once my cheeks of pink and white
Had a dimple in their mould;
But my face is haggard now
And there's silver on my brow,
Darling, whisper that you love me as of old.

In the days when I was fair,
Happy love was never doled ;
Now with beauty, dimmed by care,
Love hath grown a thousand fold ;
Sweetheart 'mid the shadows brown
Kiss my weary eyelids down,
Darling, whisper that you love me as of old.

SWEETHEART, FORGET ME NOT.

OUR love hath walked through sunny ways ;

We have not one regret.

Ah, think how dark had been our days

If we had never met.

How scentless would have seemed the flowers

That graced life's garden plot !

Because of all the dear dead hours,

Sweetheart, forget me not.

When from your side I stray afar

Fond memory still shall limn

For me your face, a peerless star

No gloom can ever dim.

My heart will keep, awake or sleep,

One bright and tender spot ;

So if you smile, or if you weep,
Sweetheart, forget me not.

The glory fades adown the west
And darkness robes the sky ;
A drearful parting comes to test
Our sweet betrothal tie,
But perfect love can never wane,
Though tears its book may blot,
Love's strongest links are forged by pain ;
Sweetheart, forget me not.

A WOMAN'S SONG.

SWEETHEART, if there should come a time

When in my careworn face

The beauty of a vanished prime

You strive in vain to trace,

When faded tresses, gray and thin,

Defy the binder's skill,

Sweetheart, betray no sign,

By word nor look repine ;

Think of the grace that once was mine ;

Kiss me, and be still.

Sweetheart, if there should come a year

When from my withered lips

The loving word that now rings clear

In tuneless weakness slips.

If I should sing with quavering voice
Some old song worse than ill,
Sweetheart, with kind deceit
No mocking words repeat ;
Think of the voice that once was sweet ;
Kiss me, and be still.

Sweetheart, if there should come a day,
I know not when nor how,
When your love beams with lessening ray,
That burns so brightly now,
When you can meet my faithful eyes
And feel no answering thrill,
Sweetheart, let me not know—
I could not bear the woe ;
Think of the dear dead long ago ;
Kiss me, and be still.

NELLIE'S EYES.

SWEET Nellie's eyes are twilight born,
The eyes I love to greet ;
They never opened first at morn,
Or 'mid the noontide heat ;
But when the sun was sinking low,
Before the stars began to glow,
Where southern jasmines sway and blow
They caught their shadows sweet.

O Nellie's eyes, sweet Nellie's eyes,
Illumined with celestial dyes,
They haunt my dreams—
With gentle gleams
Wistful,
Tristful
Twilight eyes.

Sweet Nellie's mouth is summer-kissed
To grace beyond eclipse ;
One eve a ruby rose was missed
And blossomed on her lips,
And softer than the coo of dove
Or southern winds that flit above
Are all her words, and naught but love
From out her rose mouth slips.

O Nellie's lips, sweet Nellie's lips,
Their dulcet tone like honey drips
Upon the ear
Serenely clear—
Slender,
Tender,
Summer lips.

Sweet Nellie's locks are sunset crowned
O'er ears of sea-shell mold,
And mid their lissome loops are found
The gleaming tints of gold.

No locks more fair in trancing lure
Were ever clasped by fillet pure
To wake the lay of troubadour,
Or fire a bard of old.

O Nellie's hair, sweet Nellie's hair,
My heart lies in its silken snare,
Nor time nor art
The bond shall part—
Twining,
Shining,
Sunset hair !

THE WIND AND THE ROSE.

THE wind that lifts thy sunny tresses
And softly strokes thy winsome face,
And blending whispers with caresses
Still lingers at the shrine of grace—
Ah, envied breeze, 'tis blessed too much
To kiss unchid thy curving lips,
While I, alas! scarce dare to touch,
With beating heart, thy finger tips.

The rose that on thy breast lies sleeping,
What blissful dreams that rose must know,
Unworn by any thought of weeping,
Unpierced by any pang of woe!
Ah, happy rose! in joy to live,
In bliss to die, from sorrow free:
Oh, I the whole wide world would give
Just one brief hour that rose to be.

A SONG OF THE STREET.

OH, like a sunbeam 'mid the gloom

 You swiftly glide along the pave ;

Your face is like a flower in bloom,

 A pearl beneath the ocean wave.

On me your glances never rest :

 Your starry eyes, with grace a-glow,

The stranger's care have never guessed ;

 I watch you when you do not know.

I watch you pass amid the throng

 And thread the loud and busy street ;

So heedless sweeps the crowd along,

 I tremble for your little feet.

Your looks shine out so sweet and warm,

 The winds of heaven more gently blow.

No sudden ill your feet shall harm ;
I guard you when you do not know.

Oh, fairer than the wild rose spray
Your cheek whereon the dimples peep ;
Oh, may they ever peep and play,
And ne'er in sorrow learn to weep !
May fate give you my share of bliss
And grant to me your part of woe ;
May fortune greet you with a kiss ;
I love you, and you do not know.

SWEET SIXTEEN.

THE starlight through the lattice vine
 Fell slanting on her brow,
The roses white with dew a-shine
 Swayed on the wind-rocked bough,
And waved a perfume quaint and fine
 Like incense round her mouth
Where dwelt 'mid curve and hue divine
 The glamour of the South.

Just sixteen years of joys and fears,—
 Just sixteen years hath she,
 But her eyes are blue,
 And her heart is true,
And she's all the world to me.

The rose-tree hid the stars from me
But I could watch her eyes ;
They shone like stars upon the sea
Soft mirrored from the skies.
Her little hands upon her knee
In folded stillness lay,
And in the dusk gleamed winsomely
Like lily buds astray.

Just sixteen years of joys and fears,—
Just sixteen years hath she,
But her faith is sure
And her soul is pure,
And she's all the world to me.

A silence fell ; it seemed a spell
Had fallen on my sweet.
I saw her quivering bosom swell,
I heard my heart a-beat.
I spoke !—but what ? I can not tell,
I hardly know the rest ;

But just before her tear-drops fell

I clasped her to my breast.

Just sixteen years of smiles and tears,—

Just sixteen years hath she,

But the wedding chimes

Will ring betimes

For my little bride to be.

KATHLEEN.

I THINK of you beneath the blue
 When morn trips o'er the sea,
For every ray of laughing day
 Brings back your smile to me.
Yes, when the shades are shrinking
 The plashy coverts through,
Fondly, I'm thinking,
 Kathleen,
 Of you.

I dream of you when blossoms strew
 The bonnie breast of noon,
And earth and air wax sweet and fair
 'Neath summer's balmy shoon ;

Yes, when the red rose gleaming
Reveals a richer hue,
Fondly I'm dreaming,
Kathleen,
Of you.

I long for you amid the dew,
When softly in the gloam,
To guide my feet you trim the sweet
And winsome light of home ;
Yes, when the stars are thronging
The dusky dome of blue,
Fondly I'm longing,
Kathleen,
For you.

A MADRIGAL.

LOVE is a rover forever a-straying,
Straying where bosoms are happy and young ;
On carpet and clover his wily plots laying ;
Sly his advances and cunning his tongue.

Love is a rover,
And gentle his smile,
On carpet and clover
Beware of his guile.

Love is a rover ; some day you will meet him ;
Meet him, and into his snare you will run ;
Over and over unwitting him, greet him,
And never will know till your heart is undone.

Love is a rover,
And cunning as fair ;
Over and over
I bid you beware.

A LITTLE CLOVER BLOSSOM.

It sleeps within a casket rare ;
'Tis twined about with ribbon fair,
And just one strand of shining hair—
That little clover blossom.

One solace sweet remains a-gleam
From youthful pleasure's withered beam :
It wakes again love's early dream—
That little clover blossom.

A little clover blossom !
'Tis naught at all to you,
But more than gold
Or gems untold
I prize its faded hue.

It breathes of morn and mountain brooks,
Of birds and bees and flowing nooks ;
'Tis worth a world of musty books,
That little clover blossom.

I prize it most of all I see
Because it brings in girlish glee
The bonnie lass who gave it me—
That little clover blossom.

A little clover blossom !
It wields a wondrous power ;
No words can tell
Its sacred spell—
That little faded flower.

AH, LEAVE ME NOT.

AH, leave me not, sweetheart, so soon
To lonely thoughts and wistful sighs.
The night is young. Behold the moon
Hath not yet climbed the eastern skies.
Tell me again love's rosary
Of sweet words low and soft ;
A thousand times, it could not be
By thy lips told too oft.

Ah, leave me not ! With thee away
Sad thoughts of ill my heart affright ;
And pleasure scorns the fairest day
Until thy presence makes it bright.
'Tis but a moment since we met,
So, sweetheart, bide a wee ;
And in thy love let me forget
The parting soon to be.

THE HIDDEN SONG.

O'ER blooming miles of hills and dales

The wind comes from the south,

The fragrance of a myriad vales

Is borne upon its mouth ;

Yet there's one flower best loved of all

Its lips have kissed while straying,

And : " Sweetheart,

Sweetheart,

Sweetheart ! "

I hear the zephyr saying.

With many a leap and tuneful turn

The brook runs through the wold,

By shadowed moss and quivering fern

O'er sands that gleam like gold.

In one fair dell it lingered long

Till 'mid its carol ringing :

“ Oh, Sweetheart,

Sweetheart,

Sweetheart ! ”

I hear the brook still singing.

Let breeze and brook, melodious twain,

Love's loyal heralds be,

And may their murmuring refrain

Incline thy heart to me.

By day and night—through joy and pain

I see thy sweet eyes beaming ;

Oh, Sweetheart,

Sweetheart,

Sweetheart !

Of thee my heart is dreaming.

THE MESSAGE.

THE moon is in the sky to-night,

A charm is on the sea,

A magic in whose fair delight

All sad forebodings flee.

The tide that swells

Is fraught with spells;

I hear a sweet refrain

That whispers life

Is not all strife,

And love is ne'er in vain.

Though grief may bruise, and love may lose,

It never shines in vain.

From land and sea and blissful air,

There comes the message bright,

.....
The message that I fain would share

With all sad hearts to-night :

Though love's sweet lute

In grief grow mute,

And passion end in pain,

And buds of hope

May never ope,

Yet love is ne'er in vain.

O Heart, be sure, if love is pure

It never shines in vain.

SERENADES.

I.

I MAY not, like the jasmine, climb
The lattice where she sleeps,
But when the bells of midnight chime
Across the starry deeps,
Oh I can seek the slumber time
To breathe a lover's lay,
And teach below the tender rhyme
My soaring love to say.

Softly chime, ye midnight bells,
From your ivied steepes ;
Faintly ring
Chime and sing
Lo ! my lady sleeps.

I may not, like the starlight, peer
Within her silken room,
And gently kiss her dreaming ear
Amid the fragrant gloom.
No; I can only linger here
Beneath her lattice light,
And sing her all my hope and fear
Out in the lonely night.

Gently shine, ye silver stars,
From your dewy deeps,
Shed your light
Pure and white,
Lo! my lady sleeps.

II.

THE ocean chants of lustrous pearls
Far hidden in its cave below,
Beneath the wave that lightly curls
Beneath the mirrored stars a-blow.
Ah, sweet the strain that rings

Above the billows blue,
But sweeter the songs my fancy sings
Amid the dusk, of you,
Love,
Amid the dusk, of you.

The zephyr tells of woodlands green
And mossy banks of nodding flowers,
Beneath the summer skies serene,
That bend to bless the fragrant bowers.
Ah, soft the lay that flings
Its magic o'er the dew,
But softer the strains my fancy sings
Beneath the stars, of you,
Love,
Beneath the stars, of you.

III.

THE star that in the midnight sky
Above the heaving foam

Shines brightly when the storm is nigh,
To guide the sailor home ;
That peerless light no gloom can blur
Shines not more pure above
Than innocence beams in her—
The little lass I love.

Star of my heart, O dreaming star,
From balmy sleep arise !
Shed one soft ray
To bless my lay
Before the darkness flies.

The rose that in the night wind sways
So flawless and so pure
'Tis fit to charm a seraph's gaze,
A hermit's glance to lure.
O not more fair is that white rose
In spotless grace divine,
Than is the lass whose bosom knows
The love that burns in mine.

Rose of my heart, O rare, white Rose,
In song my love I pour !
O come and rest
Upon my breast
White Rose that I adore.

IV.

BALMY breathes the jasmine bloom
Swaying on her lattice light,
Lending wings of rare perfume
To my soaring song to-night.
Up! O song, and in her room
All my passion softly tell,
Where amid the silken gloom
Sleeps the lass I love so well.

Swing and sway
Till the day
Starry blossom shyly peeping ;
Kiss her brown
Lashes down
'Neath the snowy jasmine sleeping.

Dimly gleaming Dian's horn
Sinketh westward faintly fair,
Soon will haste the opal morn
Wreathed in blushes debonair.
Still I linger love-forlorn
Still, ah, still in woe I wait ;
Wake O Love !—my heart is torn—
Wake and bless thy lover's fate.

Far or near
Thou art dear,
Every pulse for thee is leaping ;
Hear my suit,
Be not mute
'Neath the snowy jasmine sleeping.

V.

UPON a distant pine-clad hill
The shadow-haunting whip-poor-will
Laments the night with plaintive trill,
And spreads his wing for flight.

The hour hath come that bids us part ;
Nay, do not let thy teardrops start,
We part to meet again, sweetheart,
Good-night, Marie, good-night.

Good-night, Marie,
Sweet dreams to thee.
The stars have winged their flight ;
Upon the rose
The dewdrop glows,
Good-night, sweetheart, good-night.

The summer night is turning gray ;
A prescience warns the eastern way,
And o'er the fountain's silver spray
Lets fall a rosy light.
Sweet fancies bless thy smiling sleep ;
Good angels guard thy slumber deep,
And mayest thou never wake to weep,
Good-night, Marie, good-night.

Good-night, Marie ;
On land or sea,
If hope shall bloom or blight,
Thy love will cheer
When all is drear,
Good-night, sweetheart, good-night.



VERS DE SOCIÉTÉ.



AUNT JEMIMA'S QUILT.

A MIRACLE of gleaming dyes
Blue, scarlet, buff and green ;
O ne'er before by mortal eyes
Such gorgeous hues were seen !
So grandly was its plan designed,
So cunningly 'twas built,
The whole proclaimed a master mind—
My Aunt Jemima's quilt.

Each friendly household far and wide
Contributed its share ;
It chronicled the country side
In colors quaint and rare.
From belles and brides came rich brocade
Enwrought with threads of gilt ;

E'en buxom widows lent their aid
To Aunt Jemima's quilt.

No tapestry from days of yore,
No web from Orient loom,
But paled in beauteous tints before
This strange expanse of bloom.
Here glittering stars and comet shone
O'er flowers that never wilt ;
Here fluttered birds from worlds unknown
On Aunt Jemima's quilt.

O, merry was the quilting bee,
When this great quilt was done ;
'The rafters rang with maiden glee,
And hearts were lost and won.
Ne'er did a throng of braver men
In war clash hilt to hilt,
Than sought the smiles of beauty then
Round Aunt Jemima's quilt.

.....
This work of art my aunt esteemed
 The glory of the age ;
No poet's eyes have ever beamed
 More proudly o'er his page.
Were other quilt to this compared,
 Her nose would upward tilt ;
Such impudence was seldom dared
 O'er Aunt Jemima's quilt.

Her dear old hands have gone to dust,
 That once were lithe and light ;
Her needles keen are thick with rust,
 That flashed so nimbly bright.
And here it lies by her behest,
 Stained with the tears we spilt,
Safe folded in this cedar chest—
 My Aunt Jemima's quilt.

THE LITTLE WIREGRASS BELLE.

SHE is winsome and fair as the blackberry spray,
Or the crab-apple blossoms that spicily sway

And lure the wild bees in the dell.

The wild honeysuckles proclaim her their sister ;

I know by her breath that the jasmines have kissed
her

The gay little Wiregrass belle.

With quaint little arts and innocent wiles

She witches a bosom whenever she smiles

As pure as a pearl in its shell.

But far from the world and its fever and passion

Alas for her gowns ! They are guiltless of fashion,

The dear little Wiregrass belle.

Yet when she comes up to the cross-road church

She looks so entrancing that were you to search

The globe from Peru to Pall Mall
You'd find graceful women, but none who could trip
so ;

Her tiny feet rival the feet of Calypso—
The sweet little Wiregrass belle.

The hearts that adore her not even she knows ;
They flutter before her wherever she goes,
In flames that no mortal can quell.
She is kind as she's fair, but her kindness is cruel ;
To the flame that she kindles her smiles are as fuel—
The shy little Wiregrass belle.

If lonely you long for a wee bonny bride,
A blossom to bloom at your own fireside,
A blessing wherever you dwell.
Though a thousand to one the coquette will refuse
you,
You'll be a proud man if she chances to choose you—
The gay little Wiregrass belle !

BELINDA'S FAN.

WAIF from days of puffs and patches,
As it wafts its hint of musk,
Eerie strains of glees and catches
Seem to echo through the dusk.
Powdered dames in satin shimmer,
Dashing gallants gay to scan,
In the ghostly twilight glimmer
As I wave Belinda's fan.

I can view the lustres flashing
Down the bright assembly room ;
I can hear the fountains plashing,
I can scent the soft perfume.
Scores of eyes are blithely beaming ;
Let them beam as best they can,—

Who can match the azure-gleaming
Eyes behind Belinda's fan ?

In the courtliest of dances,
Fancy limns the fair coquette
Thrilling hearts with dimpled glances,
Gliding through the minuet.
I can see the beaux a-flutter,
I can read the plots they plan,
And the vows they long to utter,
Whispering o'er Belinda's fan.

Out amid the gusty porches
Stands Belinda's sedan chair ;
Drowsy lackeys wait with torches
For the footsteps of the fair ;
And the gallants, when the revel
Withers 'neath the morning's ban,
Wish the dawn were at the devil,
Bowing o'er Belinda's fan.

Never owned a monarch's sceptre

Half such power for weal or woe :

Venus' girdle never kept her

Votaries in half the glow ;

Circe's spells in magic spoken

Weakly pale and yield the van :

Think of all the gay hearts broken—

Broken by Belinda's fan.

A METRICAL MINIATURE.

HER eyes display a blended hue
Of summer skies and violets blue,
With just a hint of April dew
 To make her glances bright;
But, lest their lustre be too fair,
And brighter than the world could bear,
Long lashes, like a silken snare,
 Befringe her lids of white.

Shy apple-blossoms flushed with morn
Have lent their color to adorn
Her cheek, whereon is gayly born
 A dimple with each smile.
Her wayward tresses scorn to rest
By ribbon bound or fillet prest,

And ever weave at their behest
Fresh graces to beguile.

Her curving lips by turns recall
Red roses, poppies, cherries—all
That wins the eye or could enthrall
A hermit or a saint.

Her gleaming teeth 'twere vain to hymn :
The brightest words are all too dim ;
The artist who their light would limn
Must crush a pearl for paint.

Beneath her kirtle peeps a foot
That charms in slipper, gaiter, boot ;
Whose music makes the birds grow mute
With bended heads to hear.

Her hand can boast perfection's mold,
In winter warm, in summer cold,
And just the temperature to hold
At any time of year.

A snowy neck, a witching chin,
An ear in tint the sea-shell's twin,
A saucy nose—just put that in—

 The bonnie little belle !
Her name ? Ah, there I hesitate ;
With many a rival at her gate,
Her name, until I know my fate,
 'T were wiser not to tell.

TRUE TO NELL.

O LASSES, cease your witching smiles,
Bind not your locks for me ;
In vain you weave those winsome wiles,
My heart's no longer free.
The while I praise your lips and hair
I yield not to their spell ;
And though you're fair, yes, very fair,
I must be true to Nell.

Oh, I'll be true to Nell,
No lass the flame can quell ;
Though heaven should quake
And mountains shake
I will be true to Nell.

Your eyes are bright, but not so bright
As bonnie Nell's to me ;
Your brows, like lily-buds, are white,
But Nellie's you should see.
To ease your pain perhaps—but, oh !
Pray keep the secret well—
A kiss or two I may bestow,
But I'll be true to Nell,

Oh, I'll be true to Nell.
Yet if you will not tell,
A kiss or two
I'll grant to you,
But I'll be true to Nell.

THE PARSON'S WIDOW.

THE print of sorrow's feet
Hath but left her face more sweet
 Than of old.
Enamored fancy sighs,
For the glory of her eyes
 Can't be told.

She hath her dimple still,
And it sets all hearts a-thrill
 When it peeps.
Do you mourn her maiden blush?
Be consoled ; that witching flush
 Only sleeps.

Could the late lamented's eye
From his mansion in the sky
 Slyly scan—
'Tis pathetic. But alack !
There are few that wish him back,
 Worthy man !

She's the envy of her sex,
Who delight in picking flecks
In my fair.
Her dainty widow's cap
Is a man-enticing trap,
They declare.

On her winsome way she goes,
Quite unmindful of the foes
That pursue;
And 't is clear as dawn to me
Her detractors long to be
Widows, too!

WHEN MABEL SMILES.

WHEN Mabel smiles my heart beats high,
A softer azure tints the sky,
And zephyrs sweet flit laughing by,
With strains unheard before,

While I look in her peerless eyes,
And envy not the rich and wise,
Nor heavenward gaze with wistful sighs,
For heaven can yield no more.

When Mabel frowns the world is drear,
Each trembling dewdrop seems a tear,
The roses droop in grief and fear,
And cease to breathe perfume.

Alas, for me, a mournful swain,
The dismal moments drag in pain,
For who could bear to meet disdain
From lips so full of bloom !

When Mabel smiles my heart is proud,
When Mabel frowns my heart is bowed ;
But be she dark or sunny-browed
She reigns my bosom's queen ;
And well she knows who rules in state,
That joy and pain must alternate ;
And so fair Mabel hides my fate,
A smile and frown between.

HER LITTLE RED SHOES.

SHE isn't much taller than an Easter lily,
And the dimple on her cheek is like a wild May rose.
She sports red shoes, and she steps so stilly
There's music in the twinkle of her dainty little toes.
'T is a strange circumstance,
I tremble at her glance,
And I ask for the reason why.
And my heart gives a jump,
And goes thump, thump,
When those little red shoes trip by.

My heart is fascinated, 't is easy to discover ;
I pine to be the pavement where her feet pit-a-pat.
I view all men as rivals, for they all must love her,
She looks so captivating in her saucy summer hat.

Her lids droop down,
With a dimple and a frown,
There comes a sly look from her eye ;
And my heart gives a jump,
And goes thump, thump,
When those little red shoes trip by.

I dream of orange blossoms. How lovely they would
make her,
A-nestling in the tresses of her wayward hair ;
Where'er I see her going I long to overtake her,
And tell her how I love her, on my knees right there.
But I feel so queer
When her feet draw near,
Though a man over six feet high—
And my heart gives a jump,
And goes thump, thump,
When those little red shoes trip by.

THE COQUETTE.

HER love is like the morning dew
Upon the summer rose
That glistens fresh and fair to view
And ere the noontide goes ;
Scarce constant for one fleeting hour,
When morn returns to gild the bower,
Upon a newer, fairer flower,
The fickle dewdrop glows.

Her troth is plighted for a day ;
Alas ! she never knew
The faithful love that lives for aye,
Nor fears what time can do.
Ah, tremble not when she is nigh ;
Forbear, O heart, to beat so high,
False beams the love-light in her eye,
She never can be true.

MY SWEETHEART.

HER height? Perhaps you'd deem her tall—

To be exact, just five feet seven.

Her arching feet are not too small ;

Her gleaming eyes are bits of heaven.

Slim are her hands, yet not too wee—

I could not fancy useless fingers ;

Her hands are all that hands should be,

And own a touch whose memory lingers.

The hue that lights her oval cheeks

Recalls the pink that tints a cherry ;

Upon her chin a dimple speaks,

A disposition blithe and merry.

Her laughter ripples like a brook ;

Its sound a heart of stone would soften.

Though sweetness shines in every look,

Her laugh is never loud nor often.

Though golden locks have won renown

With bards, I never heed their raving ;

The girl I love hath locks of brown,
Not tightly curled, but gently waving.
Her mouth ?—Perhaps you'd term it large—
Is firmly moulded, full and curving ;
Her quiet lips are Cupid's charge,
But in the cause of truth unswerving.

Though little of her neck is seen,
That little is both smooth and sightly ;
And fair as marble is its sheen
Above her bodice gleaming whitely.
Her nose is just the proper size,
Without a trace of upward turning.
Her shell-like ears are wee and wise,
The tongue of scandal ever spurning.

In mirth and woe her voice is low,
Her calm demeanor never fluttered ;
Her every accent seems to go
Straight to one's heart as soon as uttered.

She ne'er coquets as others do ;
Her tender heart would never let her.
Where does she dwell? I would I knew :
As yet, alas ! I've never met her.

ANITA.

SHE's a pretty puss in boots,
With a saucy name that suits
Every glance.
Is it whispered, is it sung,
Still it ripples on the tongue
In a dance.

Oh, she walks so pit-a-pat,
And she talks of this and that
Such a way,
Just to watch her witching blush
Even Socrates would hush
Half a day.

She is not an angel; no !
They are out o' place below,
Let us grieve.
Yet perchance there is a wing
Hid beneath that puffy thing
Styled a sleeve.

Her singing makes me think
Of a tricksy bobolink
All delight,
With his silver strain aflow
Where the apple-blossoms blow
Pink and white.

Like a wild rose, newly born,
Bursting into bloom at morn,
Dew agleam,
So entrancing is her smile,
Lo, it haunts me all the while
In a dream.

LITTLE SWEETHEART NAN.

LIST, all ye merry Brownies

That frolic in the glen !

A flower hath strayed

And turned a maid

To witch the hearts of men.

Say, missed ye not a wild rose wet

With dew when morn began ?

Perchance she was a violet,

My little sweetheart Nan.

Scarce sixteen shine her summers,

Her life is like a song.

Above her head

Hang roses red,

And birds with carols throng.

And when her lovers fondly sue

With all the art they can,

She laughs and breaks their hearts in two—
My little sweetheart Nan.

'Tis shocking how sly Cupid
Works mischief with her glance;
The saucy boy
'Tis e'er his joy
In softest beams to dance.
He could not choose a sweeter nook
His cruel plots to plan,
Than in the soul-bewitching look
Of little sweetheart Nan.

I shudder at the havoc
Her smiles had wrought of old,
When chargers dashed
And lances crashed,
And knights in armor rolled.
No minstrel lips had then been mute,
Each *trouvere*, to a man,

With throbbing heart had swept his lute
In praise of sweetheart Nan.

I long to be the rose-bud
She culls with tender care.
I envy, too,
The knot of blue
That nestles in her hair.
To see that winsome ribbon wave
Had charmed e'en Caliban;
Miranda would have lost her slave
To little sweetheart Nan.

Alas ! my locks are frosty,
I'm neither rich nor wise,
And beauty's foe,
The spiteful crow,
Now promenades my eyes.
A fig for that ! Bid sorrow flee.
She lets me hold her fan !

And oh, what smiles she gives to me—

My little sweetheart Nan.

I know my chance is ghostly;

Some younger man, I know,

Will lead my sweet

With trembling feet

Where orange blossoms blow.

Yet in her heart one tiny spot

Be mine where none may scan ;

Your fond old beau, forget him not,

My little sweetheart Nan.

PHYLLIS.

THE singing of sweet Phyllis

Like the silver laughing rill is,

And her breath is like the lily's

In the dawn.

As graceful as the dipping
Summer swallow, or the skipping
Of a lambkin is her tripping
O'er the lawn.

To whom shall I compare her ?
To a dryad ? No ! She's rarer.
She is something—only fairer—
Like Bopeep.

She is merry, she is clever.
Surely had Bopeep been ever
Half so winsome, she had never
Lost a sheep.

Her eyes are like the heather,
Or the skies in April weather ;
And as blue as both together
In the spring.

Alas ! I need a metre,
As I pipe her, that is sweeter,

And a rhythm that is fleeter
On the wing.

Beyond a poet's fancies,
Though the muse had kissed his glances,
Is her dimple when it dances
In a smile.

Oh, the havoc it is making—
Days of sorrow, nights of waking—
Half a score of hearts are aching
All the while.

Sweet Phyllis ! I adore her,
And with beating heart implore her
On my loving knees before her
In alarm.

'Tis neither kind nor rightful
That a lassie so delightful
Should exert a spell so frightful
With her charm.

TWO ROSES.

LOVE, seems it not surpassing meet
That such a love as ours
Should seek expression strangely sweet
And tell its bliss in flowers?

Roses we'll choose, a white and red,
Our peerless love to plight,
Two roses by soft night-dews fed
To be the morn's delight.

A further reason I have found,
As bright and fair to see,
Why these two roses dewy-crowned
Should pass 'twixt thee and me.

The roses' bloom will soon be shed:
But dies their fragrance? Nay!
E'en so, Sweetheart, when we are dead
Our love will live for aye.

BEWITCHED.

I KNOW not if her fingers small
Were brown or snowy white ;
Howe'er I strive I can't recall
Their form and tint a-right.
I know it seemed the softest hand,
The night when first we met ;
And oh, the clasp she gave me
I never can forget.

I know not if her eyes were blue,
Or jetty black, or gray,
They owned a very charming hue,
But more I cannot say.
Have I forgot ! I frankly vow
I'm quite ashamed ; and yet
The gaze within them gleaming
I never can forget.

I know not where her dimple danced,
If on her cheek or chin ;
I only know I gazed entranced
And felt my heart fall in.
A dimple ! 't is a tiny thing
To dream of and regret ;
But how that dimple twinkled
I never can forget.

IN DIVERS KEYS.

LAST NIGHT.

O COMRADES let the song go round,
And wake the merry jest.
Of all the blessings life hath found,
A woman's love is best.
I drink not ; when the cup is crowned
I wish you all things bright ;
My vintage lies
In beauty's eyes.
I kissed my love last night.

The jasmine perfumes rose and strayed
Like elfin waifs unseen ;
The summer moonbeams stole and played
Her lattice bars between.
She shyly stood in white arrayed,

With youth and grace bedight,
She was so fair,
How could I dare—
I kissed my love last night.

A sudden glory filled the earth
It had not known before.
A happy gleam, too sweet for mirth,
The quivering moonbeams wore.
To think that I of little worth
Had won the pearl of light !
No song or speech
My bliss can reach—
I kissed my love last night.

A trembling thrilled her bosom fair
And woke a storm of sighs,
And told that love had kindled there
The flame that never dies.
That virgin shrine so pure and rare

No earthborn grief shall blight.
God make me pure
When tempters lure—
I kissed my love last night !

I sought my home and couch to dream,
Sweet waftures thronged my brain ;
Blue eyes and lily-buds a-gleam,
And roses plashed with rain ;
And when with morning's rosy beam
The glamourie took flight,
The waking brought
My sweetest thought—
I kissed my love last night.

O moon, laugh down your silver rays !
Smile up, O dimpling sea !
O fountain, toss your tinkling sprays !
O stars, rejoice with me !
With twinkling shoon ye tricky fays

Come guide my song aright,
And tip with dew
Each measure true,
I kissed my love last night !

AT PARTING.

THINK not of me when roses crown
The fair and sparkling bowl,
And song and jest with laughter drown
The sigh that haunts the soul ;
But when the mirthful lights have fled,
And Sorrow claims her fee,
Amid the shattered garlands dead,
Dear heart, remember me.

Think not of me amid the dance,
When twinkling feet are gay,
And Beauty throws a dimpled glance
That charms all woe away ;

But when the moonlight fades at morn,
Above the withered glee,
And fickle Pleasure flies forlorn,
Dear heart, remember me.

Think not of me ! I wish no place
Where my sad eyes could mar
With tristful glance the fleeting grace
Of Joy's inconstant star ;
But if false friends thy side forsake,
And fortune frown on thee,
O when thy heart is like to break,
Dear heart, remember me !

UNDER THE SILVER SEA.

OH, to go down 'neath the sea,
Far under the purling waves,
Where bubbles in glee,
Like blossoms set free,
Flit over the emerald caves ;
And the pink-lipped shells,
Like glimmering bells
Chime mystical spells
For me.

Oh, to go down,
Down,
Down,
Under the silver sea.

Oh, to go down 'neath the sea,
Far from the fever and fret,
Where feet never more
Grow weary and sore

And hearts never ache with regret !
What peace were mine,
And dreams divine ;
What bliss would shine
 For me.
Oh, to go down,
 Down,
 Down,
Under the silver sea.

Oh, to go down 'neath the sea,
 Into a luminous calm ;
No Fate to flee,
No weird to dree
 In that wonderful world of balm.
Far under the foam,
'Neath the crystal dome,
How happy my home
 Would be !

Oh, to go down,
 Down,
 Down,
Under the silver sea.

THE DUCHESS CLARE.

BRING spices from the Orient
And pearls from Indian seas ;
Bring tissues white wherein are blent
Art's glimmering witcheries ·
And glistenings
Of jewelled rings,
And gleaming armlets rare,
To grace the bride
At morning tide,
The peerless Duchess Clare.

Before the altar knelt the bride :
A winsome sight was she.

And when the priest the blessing cried,

They brought her home in glee.

“The bridal cup

Let me fill up!”

Forth laughed her rival fair

With hate o’erwrought,

’Twas death she brought

The peerless Duchess Clare.

As lovely as a lily bloom,

She lay upon her bier.

Her beauty lit the evening gloom

And shone on many a tear.

With blossoms white

They strewed the night,

And starred her golden hair;

And tombbed the bride

At midnight tide,

The peerless Duchess Clare.

THE BALTIMORE BELLE.

It is not a maiden, though beauty's its dower,
And pink are its cheeks; 'tis an old-fashioned flower
That clasps my old cedar with soft-swaying arms
And caresses its branches with shy blushing charms—
Till the tree lulls its murmur to list to the spell
That floats from the lips of the Baltimore Belle.

Go search the world over; there's nothing that blows
To match with the grace of my old-fashioned rose,
A-drip at the dawn with the glimmering dew,
Or at eve with the sunlight soft shimmering through;
While the south wind comes whispering up from the
dell,
To sigh at the feet of the Baltimore Belle.

Of old in the Maytime its fair blossoms heard
The wooing of lover as well as of bird;
For under the roses an old rustic seat

Still offers a lure to my wandering feet,
And I know a story the roses could tell ;
But 'twill not betray me—my Baltimore Belle.

The sun is fast setting. Before the stars gleam
Let me sit for an hour and dream the old dream,
While memory and I and a face that is fled
Bring back the dear grace of a day that is dead,
And the thrill of a passion that time cannot quell
In a heart that was lost 'neath the Baltimore Belle.

In the breast of each mortal there hides a romance
Too sacred and sweet for the world's idle glance ;
A sorrow that time only doubly endears,
To be fondled with heartaches or watered with tears.
The present is naught ; in the past let me dwell,
As dusk deepens down 'neath the Baltimore Belle.

The stars and the flowers will never grow old ;
'Tis only our poor hearts whose joy is soon told.

The Maytime and roses, they laugh every year,
While love keeps a tryst with a sigh and a tear.
But enough of sad thinking! Grim Fancy, farewell;
And a tender good-night to my Baltimore Belle.

THE FLOWER OF SORROW.

THE ashen flower of sorrow springs,
Regardless of degree;
'Mid golden pomps and glitterings
It blooms with pallid glee.

The tears that fall on laces fine
A pang far keener know
Than those on beggar cheeks a-shine,
Or over rags a-flow.

And Love the comforter, alas,
With healing on his wings,
The lordly palace door doth pass
To soothe the beggar's stings.

THE DYING SCOUT.

OH, make me a grave 'neath the jasmine vine
Where the blooms like censers swing,
Wafting a fragrance richer than wine
At night where the mockbirds sing.
Let me sleep to the songs of the caroling birds
And the lays that the winds repeat ;
Where the moldering leaves at dawn are stirred
By the touch of the wild doe's feet.
Make me a grave
Where the fern leaves wave
And the shimmering mosses creep ;
Sweet rest be mine
'Neath the jasmine vine,
In the heart of the wildwood deep.

Oh, make me a grave where the wild birds sing,
And place no stone at my head ;
Its golden arms let the jasmine wring
And toll its bell for the dead.

I could not rest by a sculptured wall,
 So dig me a grave where I die,
 Where the moonbeams fall through the pine trees
 tall
 Like a blessing sent from the sky.
 Make me a grave
 Where the fern leaves wave
 And the shimmering mosses creep ;
 Sweet rest be mine
 'Neath the jasmine vine,
 In the heart of the wildwood deep.

WHEN THE DARKNESS COMES DOWN ON THE DAY.

WHEN the splendors of sunset have lost their bright
 glow,
 And dense clouds are gathering lurid and low,
 Man's heart is oppressed by the thickening gloom,

And life's cherished pleasures oft wane in their bloom ;
But sadder the dusk in the wanderer's heart,
At morn or at noon, in the home or the mart,
Who sees his sweet hope in the light fade away,
And the darkness of midnight come down on the day.

The sun may be beaming, fair blossoms a-blow,
And silvery streamlets laugh out as they flow,
The applause of the world may resound high and clear
And the music of triumph peal forth to his ear ;
But the wish that is dearest Fate may not fulfil,
While a longing unutterable nothing can still
Wrings his heart with a pang that no balm can allay,
And the darkness of midnight comes down on the day.

Like one who is dying of thirst at the brink
Of a fount where not he but all others may drink,
He watches the throng as they come and they go
To quaff of the cup that he never can know.
How sweet seems the tide as it sparkles and gleams
With a beauty that tortures his soul as he dreams !

He gazes; he longs till too wretched to pray,
And the darkness of midnight comes down on the day.
Ah, sweet are the blessings that memory gives;
But where is the cure for a sorrow that lives?
When the heart makes a banquet, unbidden 't is there
To jangle the music, to blight what is fair.
One weeps for his dead with a grief that is keen,
Yet the swift-fleeting years with a balm intervene.
But alas for the anguish that time cannot stay,
When the darkness of midnight comes down on the
 day!

The scent of the roses, the gold of the grain,
The lilt of the wild-bird, all woo him in vain;
In vain in the wine-cup he seeks for relief,
Each bubble that laughs is a mock to his grief,
Each dewdrop that shines is as sad as a tear,
And sad are the songs that he once loved to hear,
Oh, pity, kind Shepherd, the poor wretch astray,
When the darkness of midnight comes down on the
 day.

A SONG FOR THE MISSING.

LET a song be sung for the missing
Who died in the dark alone,
With never a pitying face above
To soothe the dying moan ;
Only the night winds whisper
After the fiery fight,
And a star's dim ray
To light the way
To the rest beyond the night.

Let a wreath be twined for the soldiers
Who sleep in an unknown grave,
Under the tall Virginian pines,
Or 'neath the Atlantic's wave ;
Who never caught the glad huzza
That told the day was won ;
A diadem
Of flowers for them,
The fairest 'neath the sun.

Let a teardrop fall for the heroes !

Our bleeding hearts are sore ;

And O, for a smile from the dear dead boys

Whose faces we saw no more !

We crowned our great with laurel

When the conquering captains came ;

Let a tear be shed

For the missing dead

Afar from the trump of fame.

A WINTER LAY.

A WINTER LAY.

ART thou to nature true through good and ill ?
Come, loyal heart, and stray the wooded hill
While wanes the tristful day. On wold and mere
The wind's dim murmur soothes the dying year.
And blending sob-like with its drear refrain
Is heard the sorrow of the winter rain
In plaintings low. 'Tis a pathetic day
When nature's fingers with our heartstrings play.
No hopeful ray peeps forth to cheer the eye,
A dank and murky chillness drapes the sky.
'Tis vain from drearful earth with wistful glance
Sky-ward to seek bland Summer's blue expanse
Where feathery clouds in fairy idlesse sleep,
Like daisies on the meadow's emerald deep;
Only the raindrops from the sodden leaves
Shed ghastly glimmers on the gust that grieves.
The perfumes of the wood—oh, where are they !
Lo, now a host of eerie odors stray.
Each hill-side path, and sombre-vistaed dell
And brook where once shy thrushes joyed to dwell;

Uncanny scents that seem the wraiths of flowers
That grudge their fragrance to the sunny hours,
And now in penance with a ghostly breath
Still haunt their native woodland after death.
Behold the bonny red-birds' nest bereft
Now holds no nestling in its lonely weft !
Once slyly hidden in the brown-twigg'd thorn,
Whose milk-white fragrance wooed the April
morn.

Filled with dead leaves it now rocks to and fro
As if with rustlings sad to voice its woe ;
And meet it seems the poor tired leaves should
find
The nest, their greenness cheered, a haven kind.

THE EMPTY NEST.

LIST, oh list, to the desolate wail
Through the branches bleak and bare !
Like the haggard rhyme of a witch's tale
It swells and falls on the air

To rise again with a weird unrest :

Swing to and fro

Oh ! haven of woe,

Wails the wind to the empty nest.

'Tis oh, for the flash of a red, red wing,

And the balm of the blossoms white

A-sway to a song that is sweeter than Spring

In its purling pure delight.

Oh longing vain ! From the drear nor'west,

Swing to and fro

Oh haven of woe,

Wails the wind to the empty nest.

PENT in his lair until the storms be past,

Sequestered from the north wind's stinging blast,

The bumble bee in cozy slumber dreams

Of mossy dingles and soft rippling streams

O'erhung by flowerets waiting to be won

When blue-eyed Spring leads back the ardent sun,

And Winter's restless wrath is all forgot
Neath spell of primrose and for-get-me-not.
The cricket too hath buried in the mold
His Autumn sorrow from a world a-cold ;
Or else a guest beside the cottage hearth
He wakes again his minstrelsie and mirth ;
And as he gaily sweeps his elfin lyre
His lay finds answer in the crackling fire,
Which echoes back his summer-toned refrain
Of joyous revels in the golden grain.

THE CRICKET.

WHERE the knot-grass twines
'Neath the drowsy pines
And the dewdrops shine
 In June,
With footfall light
 And lyre in tune
I dance all night
 'Neath the moon.

When the wood blooms shed
On the spider's thread,
And the leaves turn red,
My lyre
I grasp and go
Ere the frost come nigher,
And toast my toe
By the fire.

No more on gleeful wing the swallow dips
His twittering bill to kiss the lakelet's lips,
No more the water lily's petals gleam
In white and amber beauty on the stream,
To lure the starlight through the thickening dusk
Or snare the night wind with the breath of musk ;
Long since was merged its fragrant brow of snow,
Like Undine, in the streamlet's crystal flow.
The brief day flits. Must only memory cheer
The gathering gloom that wreathes the waning year ?

.....

In all the world is there no blithesome hint
Of future joy? Welcome as dawn's first glint
After a night of woe, shines merrily
In green and crimson pride the holly tree.
Knight of the wood with emerald armored breast
It waves defiance from its coral crest
To Winter's onset. Through the Summer tide
When hill and dale in blooming verdure vied,
Unsought by bird and bee, few eyes could trace
The early promise of the rich hued grace
Which waxing brighter with each day of dule
Will deck with joy the cot and kirk at Yule.
Each crimson berry wafts a happy dream
Of carols clear and tapered boughs a-gleam,
Sweet bells a-chime, and massive logs a-glow,
And games and kisses 'neath the mistletoe,
With many a gleeful prank and frolic quip
From merry twinkling toe and laughing lip
To crown the Christmas-tide.

THE MISTLETOE.

COME gather round the holly tree
And mirth shall meet you there,
With many a catch and tricksy glee
To chase your wintry care.
At Christmas-tide all gloom deride,
So troll the belles and beaux ;
But pray beware when e'er you bide
Beneath the mistletoe.

Oh, Christmas is a merry time,
Yet one dear joy I miss ;
With every peal the silver chimes
Ring back the parted bliss,
A bliss that by stern fates rebuff
No wedded wight may know—
To steal a kiss and catch a cuff
Beneath the mistletoe.

So Fancy wiles

E'en, neath the dripping trees the heart to smiles,
With winsome prophesies of Yule-tide glee.
Fair Sprite, come do another grace for me,
And whispering say: Here 'neath the leafy mold
The wild oxalis hides her glistening gold,
Till coined by the magic touch of Spring
To lure the butterfly's inconstant wing;
And here beside this stalwart brown-armed oak
In slumber bide the dainty violet folk,
Whose azure beauty from a nun-like hood
Shall one day shyly peep and take the wood;
And on this sloping sward betwixt the trees
The wind flower's fragile grace shall witch the breeze.

THE WIND-FLOWER.

OVER the hill-side warm and balmy
Under the kiss of the Spring-tide beam,
Shy as the wood-fern slim and palmy

.....
Fringing the marge of the forest stream,
Touched by the charm of the first glad days
With a wild wan beauty the wind-flower sways.

Up from the turf with white face a-quiver
Lithe and frail on its stem a-float,
It trembles and quakes like a star on the river
When the tide is stirred by a fairy boat;
Born of the mist and the moon-lit haze
Like a waif from Elfland the wind-flower sways.

Oh, but the face of it mirthless and wistful
Never the brush of a limner could paint;
Oh, but the grace of it teary and tristful,—
The skies wax bluer, and the wind grows faint;
And the eerie gleam of it haunts his gaze
Who e'er hath been where the wind-flower sways.

Alas, sly Fancy is a fickle jade
Who leaves our side when most we need her aid,

E'en now, as if she feared the hastening night
She lures me homeward with a beckoning flight,
Where, shining like a rose amid the gloom,
The ingle lamp fills all the room with bloom
Whose radiance falls with a caressing glow
On many a mellow bard of long ago ;
And soon entranced by Herrick's twinkling glee,
Or charmed by Waller's courtlier minstrelsie,
Let tempests war in vain ! Made glad with song
For one rare night the world works me no wrong.

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